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ABSTRACT

In an effort to identify the factors which most influence the educational success of Hispanic students at Ohlone College (OC), in California, a survey was mailed to all Hispanic students registered at the college in fall 1988 and spring 1989. A total of 1,142 Hispanic students were contacted, comprising 10.5% of the student body. Of these, 201 returned completed questionnaires for a 17.6% response rate. In order to supplement the survey data, and to compare survey respondents to the total Hispanic population at the college, additional data were obtained from the student history files. Study results included the following: (1) the respondent group was two-thirds female, compared with just over 50% for the total Hispanic population of OC; (2) compared with the total Hispanic population at the college, a disproportionate number of respondents were over 21, continuing students, enrolled full-time, and had higher grade point averages; (3) 35.1% of all Hispanic students failed to maintain a grade point average of 2.0 (4-point scale); (4) nearly 70% of OC's Hispanic students identified themselves as Mexican-American, Chicano, or Mexicano; (5) nearly 40% of respondents felt that high school did little to prepare them for college; (6) of all matriculant groups at OC, Mexican-American students had the lowest retention rates after Native Americans; (7) there was a positive correlation between respondents' family income and grade point average; and (8) academically successful respondents reported taking greater advantage of student services such as financial aid and counseling. Data tables, recommendations, and the survey instrument are included. (PAA)

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OHLONE COLLEGE HISPANIC RETENTION SURVEY

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The Ohlone College Hispanic Retention Survey was financed through a $1,000 grant from the Ohlone Development Foundation. This report is based on the research findings on this first of its kind "pilot" study of a specific segment of Ohlone's student population. The purpose of the Hispanic Retention Survey project was to collect educational data on Ohlone's Hispanic students in order to assess which characteristics most influence their educational success. The data will also point out areas that hamper success here at Ohlone. The collection of data was accomplished in two ways:

1. A survey questionnaire was formulated, developed, pilot tested and then approved by our committee members. It was then mailed to all Hispanic students registered for Fall 1988, and Spring 1989, semester. This total amounted to 1142 students, or approximately 10.5% of total student enrollment for the same period. A total of 201 completed questionnaires were returned, a 17.6% return rate. Due to staffing and cost constraints, outside of on-campus contacts, second mailings or follow-up telephone contacts were not pursued. According to Don Mayall, Research Analyst, this response rate is somewhat higher than expected for a mail survey of college students conducted in this manner.

2. The survey responses were then individually entered and tabulated on the computer. However, as we began to compute the information, we found that in order to compare the respondents academic and personal background with that of the total enrollment of Hispanic students at Ohlone, an additional step was necessary. The social security number of each respondent was imputed to the data base in order to have access and extract critical information such as age,sex, grade point average, persistence rates, enrollment status, class level, and current units among both groups of Hispanic students, through their student history files.

DATA COMPARISONS

A comparison of survey respondents to total Hispanic enrollment indicated that the survey respondents differed in some areas. For example, the respondent group were two-thirds female compared with slightly more than 50% female among total Hispanic students. In terms of age, respondents represented a somewhat larger percentage of students over 21. Fewer respondents are of the youngest age group (20 and under). Respondents represented slightly fewer new students, and freshmen. Yet, in regards to their status as full time students, grade point average and persistence as far as continuing to enroll from one semester to the next, the respondents, more so than the total Hispanic student population, have significantly higher rates in all three areas.

This survey also showed that, a significant proportion of both groups of Hispanic students are not doing well academically with almost half of our 1142 total Hispanic enrollment failing to maintain a 2.0 grade point average and 35.1% of respondents with a less than 2.0 grade point average. Approximately 60% of both groups attended high schools outside of our local service area.

Another significant aspect was that almost 70% of Ohlone's Hispanic students identified themselves as Mexican-American, Chicano or Mexicano; in other words, of Mexican ancestry/descent (see Table 1). This data substantiates to some degree the need to go beyond the designation of Hispanic, especially here in California, where 85% of the Hispanic population are of Mexican descent/ancestry.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (201)

Students' marital status indicated only a third of the respondents were married or had been. Family size, about 30% had at least one child.

When asked to rate high school preparedness for college, nearly 40% felt high school did little to prepare them for college and/or that the preparation was poor.

The employment status of the students showed that nearly half were working full-time, while another third work part-time.

The median income was between $20,000 and $29,000. The results indicated that the higher the income level, the higher the grade point averages, except at the $50,000 bracket, the trend reverses and their GPA goes down.

When asked if they were first generation college attendees, two-thirds reported they were not the first to attend college, however, very few indicated either parent had attended college. This high percentage is unlike other research data on Chicanos and could be attributed to the phrasing of the question, as many Chicanos do not think in terms of "nuclear family" but rather extended family like aunts, cousins, etc.

In the area of ethnic identification, 50% felt the term Mexican-American best described their ethnic background, and almost 70% indicated Mexican descent and ancestry when Mexican-American, Chicano and Mexican are combined.

Bilingualism is prevalent among respondents with over eighty percent reporting English was spoken in the home, and nearly 65 percent indicated Spanish was also spoken. In a quarter of the homes, Spanish was the only language spoken.

SUPPORT SERVICES

When respondents were asked what campus services or individuals have been helpful to them, their responses included teachers, counselors, Admission and Records, and the Library as the most helpful. On the other hand, a high percentage of respondents failed to rate many of the other services listed, which may imply a lack of familiarity with these services.

SUPPORTIVE PERSONS

Although very few respondents indicated that either parent had attended college, parents that have graduated from college are known to contribute to student success. Supportive friends on and off-campus were rated as most supportive on the survey and supportive teachers ratings were also significant.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Respondents felt that personal satisfaction was the most important factor relating to successful completion of their goals. Good study habits, grades and promise of a good job and better living standards were also given high importance.

Programs and Services

One-third of all respondents felt that English and Math placement scores based on the ASSET test were inaccurate. The choice of their current program or major was an individual decision for 70% of respondents. The most often cited reason for attending Ohlone was the proximity of the campus.

Open-Ended Responses

The survey listed five open ended questions: 1) chosen career field, 2) fields I have thought about entering, 3) workshops I would be interested in, 4) what I like about Ohlone, and 5) reasons for not attending. The student responses to these questions are contained in the body of the study. No further analysis has been made on this data.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Several indicators of student performance were computed from the student history files. These were the grade point average and the proportion of students enrolled in one semester who re-enrolled the following semester. The study population includes all active enrollment for both fall and spring, thus the study includes students enrolled in both semesters, as well as fall only who did not return in spring, and new spring students. Because of this, the best single measure of performance appears to be the grade point averages (GPA) for Spring 1989, and for Fall 1988 so as not to duplicate or eliminate students enrolled in only one of the two semesters.

Students with a GPA of 2.0 or better was used as an outcome variable to identify characteristics related to success for the survey population. Frequency tables for each survey response by percent failing and passing were produced and chi-square tests of significance computed. Following is a list of survey responses that appear to be related to a successful outcome at the 5 percent level of confidence--that is, the relationship between a passing GPA and the survey response could have occurred by chance only 5 time out of 100.

SIGNIFICANT SURVEY RESPONSES

Year of High School Graduation
Income
Financial Aid was helpful
Job Placement was helpful
Admissions and Records was helpful
Career Planning was helpful
Counselor was helpful
Teacher was supportive
Library was helpful
Goal was AA/AS degree and/or transfer
Money was reason for pursuing goal

PROFILE OF SUCCESSFUL HISPANIC STUDENT

The survey provided some clues as to what might be seen as a profile of the successful Hispanic students as measured by a passing grade point average.

-Maturity appeared to be an ingredient in success as students who had been out of high school for some time did better than recent high school graduates.

-Income levels also appeared to be related to success. The higher the income, the greater the proportion of success except at $50,000 and above level.

-Successful students were more likely to rate these student services highly: financial aid, job placement, admissions, career planning, counseling and library services.

-Successful students were more likely to rate teachers as supportive than did the non-successful students.

-The successful student was more likely to have a goal of obtaining an associate of arts/science degree than the non-successful student.

-The successful student was more likely to rate financial reward as the reason for pursuing their educational goals than non-successful students.

RETENTION

As reported in the project proposal, among Hispanics in California, the Chicano population has one of the worst college drop-out, retention and transfer rates. To see if this applied here at what appears to be a middle-class, suburban college with a moderately low Hispanic population, some further computations were conducted by our research analyst. His findings seem to indicate a similar drop out pattern at Ohlone as well. When the retention from Fall 1988 to Spring 1989, is computed by ethnicity of all categories of students--full time, part-time, etc.--the differences among ethnic categories do not appear to be significant, as can be seen in the following table.

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

Ethnic Group	% Enrolled F 88/Continuing S89
Native American	51
Asian	54
Black	49
White	54
Hispanic	54
Filipino	57
Total All Groups	54

However, the research showed a different picture emerging when looking at matriculants, or students who completed the assessment process for Fall 1988. This, generally, is a younger group of students with transfer or vocational goals and no prior college experience. Excluded (at this time) were students taking fewer than seven units or enrolling only in evening classes or courses with skills prerequisites. As part of the assessment process, students completed an Educational Planning Form, in which slightly more detailed ethnic identification questions were asked. As a result, a separate breakout for Mexican-American and Other Hispanic are indicated. As the following table indicates, matriculants of other ethnic groups have higher retention rates overall, but Hispanics, especially those self-identifying as Mexican-American, are below average in retention rates.

MATRICULANTS

Ethnic Group		% Enrolled F 88/Continuing S 89
Native American		50
Asian		65
Black		70
White		68
Mexican American	59	
Other Hispanic	66	
Total Hispanic		61
Total All Groups		67

The reason for this lower rate for Mexican-American is not clear. An examination of this should be a priority for matriculation research.

SUMMARY

Initially, on a national level, the issue of minority access was recruitment, but now more and more colleges and universities see the need to deal with the total environment in which students study, thus retention has become a crucial element in this process. Many college and university officials are starting to look at computer data in order to see which services are used successfully by minority students. For many years, the Chicano counselors and staff at Ohlone have been attempting to do more in the areas of Hispanic student recruitment, retention and transfer but have met with limited support for their efforts from both faculty and administrators. Oftentimes, their concerns have been seen as marginal, "pet" project or "self-serving" interests. However, since the climate is changing with Chancellor Office mandates, community colleges, are now focusing more on Mexican-American students among others, who are seen as "historically undereducated." With these changes in mind, a more unified approach can be taken by Hispanic and non-Hispanic educators to improve the educational needs of all of our students.

For these reasons, the timeliness of a survey project like this one cannot be underemphasized and can be utilized by us in order to continue to monitor academic, retention and matriculation efforts. Furthermore, this Hispanic student survey can serve as a pilot project for other community colleges statewide and nationally with similar demographics.

Overall, this project serves as a vivid example of Hispanic attrition through the educational pipeline right here on our campus. Nearly 40% of our survey respondents felt high school did little to prepare them for college, which may be reflective of why half of our 1142 Hispanic students fall below 2.0 grade point average. Additionally, of all matriculant groups at Ohlone, Mexican-American students currently have one of the lowest retention rates.

Another critical area highlighted by the survey project is the impact of economic factors on Hispanic student success, or lack of it. The average annual income for Hispanic respondents is roughly $27,000. (The mean income figure for 1990, according to ABAG figures for the Fremont area is $49,300.) The survey also indicates that half of our respondents attend college while working full-time. Striving for economic stability appears to be the strongest motivation that Hispanic students indicated. But the survey showed a definite correlation between academic success and financial stability. The higher the family income, the more successful the student with respect to grades. Those with lower family incomes had a higher propensity to work more hours, and earned lower GPA's. As Chicano educators and counselors, we realize that working full time takes a terrible toll on academic success for students, in general, let alone high risk students.

The survey further showed that an extremely low number of Chicano students are receiving financial aid. Unless financial aid is more readily available, these students will continue to work full-time thus setting themselves up for academic failure. Re-evaluation of EOPS and financial aid criteria needs to be re-examined as a disproportionate amount of money is being allocated to students of refugee status. Many of these students come from middle to upper class backgrounds in their own countries. Thus, some adjustments have to be made to better accommodate financially eligible students who are this nation's historically undereducated.

Finally, the survey also demonstrated that the successful Hispanic students indicated that they take advantage of using student services such as financial aid, job placement, admissions, career planning, counseling and library services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Expand articulation with local high schools to insure Hispanic students are not being neglected or overlooked in college preparation. One way this need is currently being met is through the Hispanic Youth Project which intervenes at one junior high and high school in Fremont. The three pronged approach through tutoring, mentoring and parental involvement can and should be implemented and supported district wide. This type of partnership program can be the pipeline to get Hispanic students to pursue college.

2. Implement a comprehensive academic and support service program as a pilot project to guide incoming Chicano students through a two year Liberal Studies transfer program.

3. Utilize matriculation research, to examine why Mexican-American matriculants have the lowest retention rates. Further research is necessary to investigate the high failure rate of Chicano students.

4. Provide Chicano students with better access to financial aid information and eligibility requirements in order for students to cut back on their working hours.

5. Develop innovative ways to improve and increase outreach and information dissemination to Hispanic families in the Ohlone service area.

jl/docmaria
rev 03/01/90

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Student Services Staff

FROM: Peter Blomerley

DATE: May 15, 1990

SUBJECT: Opportunity for Inservice Workshops on "Successful Teaching Strategies for Chicano Students"

I would like to call your attention to these upcoming workshops on campus. They have great potential value for improvement of our teaching effectiveness and/or delivery of student service to our Chicano students.

Recently, a retention survey was completed at Ohlone. The survey indicated that one-half of our Chicano students were below 2.0 GPA at the end of the 1988-89 academic year, and that Chicano students have one of the lowest retention rates on our campus. For the first time, we were able to document the actual characteristics of these students in the 1988-89 academic year. Your attendance will allow sharing of survey findings and discussion for implementation of successful teaching strategies that work in a multicultural setting.

It is my hope that you will be able to attend at least one workshop before the academic year concludes. More information on the survey will be included in the workshops. Please call Maria Ramirez (Career Center) at 659-6135 to confirm.

jl/doc0509a

OHLONE COLLEGE

HISPANIC STUDENT SURVEY

1. NAME_____ AGE____ MALE____ FEMALE____
2. MARITAL STATUS:_____ IF MARRIED, HOW MANY CHILDREN_____
3. YEAR YOU GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL:_____ HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDED:_____
4. HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL HIGH SCHOOL PREPARED YOU FOR COLLEGE & WHAT WAS YOUR GRADE POINT AVERAGE?

   _____

   _____

   G.P.A.:_____
5. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS:

   FULL TIME ____ PART TIME _____ NOT EMPLOYED/LOOKING FOR WORK ____

   ON DISABILITY ____ NOT EMPLOYED/NOT LOOKING FOR WORK ____
6. WHAT IS YOUR INCOME LEVEL? (IF YOU LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS USE THEIR INCOME FOR PAST YEAR)

   below $10,000___ $10,000-10,999___ $20,000-29,999___ $30,000-39,999___

   $40,000-49,999___ over $50,000___
7. ARE YOU THE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

   YES___ NO___ IF NO, WHICH OTHER RELATIVES _____

   _____
8. WHAT TERM BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

   CHICANO(A)____ MEXICAN AMERICAN____ MEXICANO(A)____ LATINO(A)____

   CENTRAL AMERICAN_____PUERTO RICAN___ OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)_____
9. WHAT LANGUAGE(S) ARE SPOKEN IN YOUR HOME?_____
10. WHAT SERVICES HAVE YOU USED AT OHLONE COLLEGE AND HOW HELPFUL HAVE THEY BEEN?

    PLEASE RATE EACH SERVICE USED BY MARKING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS NEXT TO EACH ITEM:

    (1) ALWAYS HELPFUL (2) USUALLY HELPFUL (3) NEVER HELPFUL

    ADMINISTRATOR____ TEACHERS____ COUNSELING____

    FINANCIAL AID ____ ADMISSIONS & RECORDS____ TUTORIAL____

    JOB PLACEMENT____ CAREER CENTER____

    VETERANS SERVICES____ ENABLER SERVICES____ LIBRARY SERVICES____

    E O P S____ GENDER EQUITY/DISPLACED HOMEMAKER____
11. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE AT OHLONE IS ADEQUATE FOR SUCCESS AT THIS COLLEGE?

    MORE THAN ADEQUATE____ ADEQUATE____ INADEQUATE____
12. WHAT PERSON(S) ON CAMPUS AND/OR FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN THE MOST SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR ATTENDING OHLONE? PLEASE RATE (1) most supportive

    (2) somewhat supportive

    (3) not supportive

    TEACHER(S)____ BOTH PARENTS____ FATHER____ FRIEND(S) ON CAMPUS____

    COUNSELOR MOTHER SPOUSE FRIEND'S\ OFF CAMPUS

13. HOW ACCURATELY DO YOU FEEL THE ASSET TEST REFLECTED ON YOUR ABILITY IN ENGLISH & MATH?
ACCURATELY____ NOT ACCURATELY____

14. WHAT IS YOUR GOAL HERE AT OHLONE?
GRADUATE WITH A.A./A.S. DEGREE____ COMPLETE GENERAL EDUCATION & TRANSFER____
RECEIVE CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT____ TAKE COURSES THAT INTEREST YOU____
NOT SURE____ OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN_____ _____

15. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE IN A MAJOR OR PROGRAM BEST SUITED FOR YOUR NEEDS AND INTERESTS?
YES____ NO____ NOT SURE____ IF YES, PLEASE LIST CHOSEN CAREER FIELD_____
_____

16. WHAT JOB OR CAREER HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT GOING INTO?_____
_____

17. WHAT ATTRACTS YOU TO THIS FIELD?
MONEY____ HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING____ KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE WITH JOB____
SOCIAL REWARD____ OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)_____

18. HOW DID YOU GET ENROLLED IN YOUR CURRENT PROGRAM OR MAJOR?
I CHOSE IT MYSELF____ MY GUIDANCE COUNSELOR CHOSE IT____ MY PARENTS CHOSE IT____
BOTH THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR & I CHOSE IT____ FRIENDS INFLUENCED ME____
SOMEONE IN THIS FIELD HAS INFLUENCED ME____ OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)_____
_____

19. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO ATTEND OHLONE? _____
_____
_____

20. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT OHLONE?_____
_____

21. WOULD CAREER WORKSHOPS WITH HISPANIC ROLE MODELS BE OF INTEREST TO YOU?
YES____ NO____ IF YES, WHAT AREAS?_____

22. PLEASE RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS IN THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF YOUR GOALS AT OHLONE.
(1) MOST IMPORTANT
(2) SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
(3) NOT IMPORTANT

GRADES____ TIME MANAGEMENT____
FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION____ PROMISE OF A GOOD JOB & BETTER LIVING STANDARD____
GOOD STUDY HABITS____ PERSONAL SATISFACTION____ OTHER____

23. IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING OHLONE, LIST REASON(S) WHY?_____
_____

24. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE ANY COMMENTS THAT YOU FEEL ARE IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW.
_____
_____

EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES WITH HISPANIC STUDENTS

The Hispanic Educational Forum Project invites all interested Faculty and Student Service Staff

May 2nd (Wed)	Dr. Dolores Escobar, Dean School of Education San Jose State University	**12 noon to 1 Staff Lounge**
May 18th (Fri)	Antoinette Torres, Director Minority Engineering Program U.C. Berkeley	**1 pm to 3:00 Staff Lounge**
May 21st (Mon)	Priscilla Gonzalez-Leiva, R.N., Chief Health Professions Career Opportunity Program Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, Sacramento **-and-** Lurelean Gaines, Assistant Dean of Instruction, East Los Angeles Community College	**10 am to 12 Staff Lounge**
May 24th (Thur)	Richard Regua, Instructor English Department ENLACE Program Evergreen Community College **-and-** Henry Estrada, Instructor Math Department ENLACE Program Evergreen Community College	**2 pm to 3:15 Room 1102** **3:15 to 4:30 Room 1102**

PLEASE RSVP TO: Maria Ramirez (Career Center) - 659-6135

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